

in 2003, it went to \$1.57. Then in 2004, it went to \$19.0. In 2005, it went to \$2.37, and you know what, in April it was \$29.1. It is now over \$3. I just paid \$3.05 at home, and it cost me \$56 to fill up my minivan.

So, when we are talking about what goes on up here and how disconcerting and disappointing it is that we have no leadership on the other side and no interest or ability for them, who clearly are in charge of this country and who could make this change, at the snap of their fingers if they wanted to, they can stand and say they cannot do anything to affect oil prices, but the President's been in office 6 years. He had the ability to start right from the get-go and begin investing in alternative energy and trying to actually move the ball down the field when it comes to changing oil prices, but let us look at the timeline of what truly has resulted from the Bush and Republican energy plan.

You have this White House energy plan that was submitted on May 16, 2001, just about 5 years ago now, and you can see as you move up that timeline that, with each phase of the plan that has been implemented, this is the increase in gas prices. There is a significant correlation between the implementation of their energy plan and the increase in the cost of a gallon of gas.

May 17, 2002, the Energy Secretary announces an effort to implement their energy plan under existing law. Gas prices go higher.

Go a little further down the road, and it is December 10, 2004, 75 percent of their energy plan that was hatched in that secret meeting, which they refuse to reveal who was part of it, 75 percent of the energy plan is implemented, and now we are at almost \$2 a gallon, actually a little bit more than \$2 a gallon.

Then you go over to March 9 of last year, 95 percent of their energy plan is implemented, and we are approaching \$3 a gallon.

August 8, 2005, President Bush signs the energy legislation into law, and that is when gas literally in some places hits over \$3 a gallon. Now, it has fluctuated back and forth. We are at over \$3 a gallon again.

The chart does not lie. It is very clear that their plan raised gas prices. You have an administration infected with former closely affiliated representatives of the oil industry, all the way up to the two people who run this country. I mean, it does not take a brain surgeon or a rocket scientist to figure it out. I mean, come on.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Talk about a picture speaking a thousand words. Why do we have high gas prices? Why do we have the problems?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You want to hear the statistic I heard today.

As far as boiling it down what this means for people, \$56 to fill up my minivan. We have not raised the minimum wage since 1997 in this country,

and at the current minimum wage, a minimum wage worker has to work 38 minutes before they can even afford 1 gallon of gas, 38 minutes. I mean, that is just over the top outrageous. I mean, it really is.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If I can make a comment, thinking about the war and where we are right now with the whole war situation, that was all done in secrecy. No one knew what was going on. The intelligence was screwed up. Look where we are now.

The energy plan, secrecy, closed doors. You are not allowed in, and people even from these big companies were denying that they were even there, and then we find out from a White House document a week or so ago that they were there. All done in secrecy, the success of our democracy over the years.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Can I just add one other. The prescription drug benefit, so-called part D, there was information—

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. To the point where we did not know what the total cost was going to be.

Mr. DELAHUNT. There was information available to the White House that was not provided to the Congress in terms of the costs, and now we are faced with profound problems in terms of the execution and the implementation of that plan. Seniors are frustrated and confused. The so-called donut hole is going to be a stone wall that many seniors are going to run into.

But the head of the Medicare trust fund told the actuary that was in possession of the White House estimates of the costs of the program, that if he disclosed those figures to this Congress, that he would lose his job. In other words, do not tell anybody anything.

It just supports your point about an administration that is shrouded in secrecy, that refuses to be straight with the American people and, I might add, refuses to indulge or to engage, rather, in genuine consultations with the Congress and particularly Democrats. We are kept out of any thoughtful, legitimate, genuine interaction in forming policy.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, when you are talking about the energy policy, it is the Republican policy. It is the Republican \$2.91 a gallon at the pump, up from \$1.45 four years ago. It is your price per gallon. It is not Democrats. So please do not even suggest that Democrats had anything to do with the price that is breaking the average American family.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. He just articulated exactly what I was going to say, much more eloquently than I ever could. So maybe I will just point to this picture again, but I think Mr. DELAHUNT did make the point.

If I could, the strength of our democracy over the years in a bicameral legislature is the debate of the minority party and the majority party in the

House and coming to some reasonable solutions that have been debated through the committee process and vetted and studied and looked at, and then over to the Senate, and let that happen and then come together with the administration and make something happen.

When you try to govern in secrecy, you are incapable, FEMA, energy, you know, education costs, all this stuff, there is no debate. It is just rule with an iron fist.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I am going to yield to Mr. DELAHUNT, but first, well, that kills the whole thing.

When you are doing a back-room deal, you do not come out under the lights. You do not share how we should mold policy in front of the public. You do a back-room deal.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Right.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. That is what this country is suffering from right now, a back-room deal, and the American people are paying for it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The end result is that chart you have right there behind Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is the \$3 a gallon in gas. It is the no vision for energy down the line. It is high tuition costs. It is health care costs spiraling out of control for how many years. That is the end result of the back-room deals that you are talking about.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Let me just add another illustration.

What it comes down to is that let me go back to the Medicare reform issue, the so-called prescription drug, just to remind our colleagues and the American people that there was no consultation with Democrats about the prescription drug benefit. In fact, there was a so-called conference committee that should have brought Democrats and Republicans together to discuss the proposal, but Republicans in this House chose not to even inform the Democrats on that committee where the conference committee was meeting. They were shut out. They were shut out on that. They are shut out on energy. They are shut out on consultations in terms of the war, what led up to the war.

I mean, this is a problem of our institutions being eroded because of the proclivity of this administration and this Republican Congress to operate behind closed doors and keep out the bad news from the American people and other important policy-makers in our government in our democracy.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We have a couple of minutes left.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. The only thing I want to add in closing is that it is just such a sorry excuse to say we cannot do anything about gas prices. I mean, their argument is you cannot snap your fingers and make a difference overnight. If they cared at all, if the President meant what he said when he said we should end America's addiction to oil, like he said in his State of the Union address, then he would have embarked on a plan that